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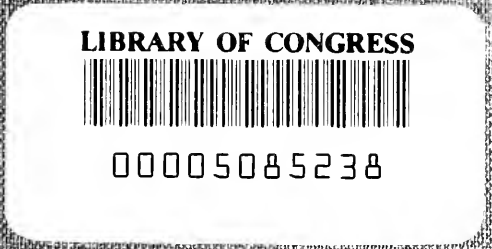

THE WERNER
HISTORICAL
BOOKLETS

# THE STORY OF HENRY CLAY

For
READERS IN
PRIMARY GRADES

BY...
FRANCES and LAURA CRAVENS

WERNER SCHOOL BOOK COMPANY
CHICAGO NEW YORK

*THE WERNER HISTORICAL BOOKLETS*

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426(?)-F

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Henry Clay.

TO THE CHILDREN

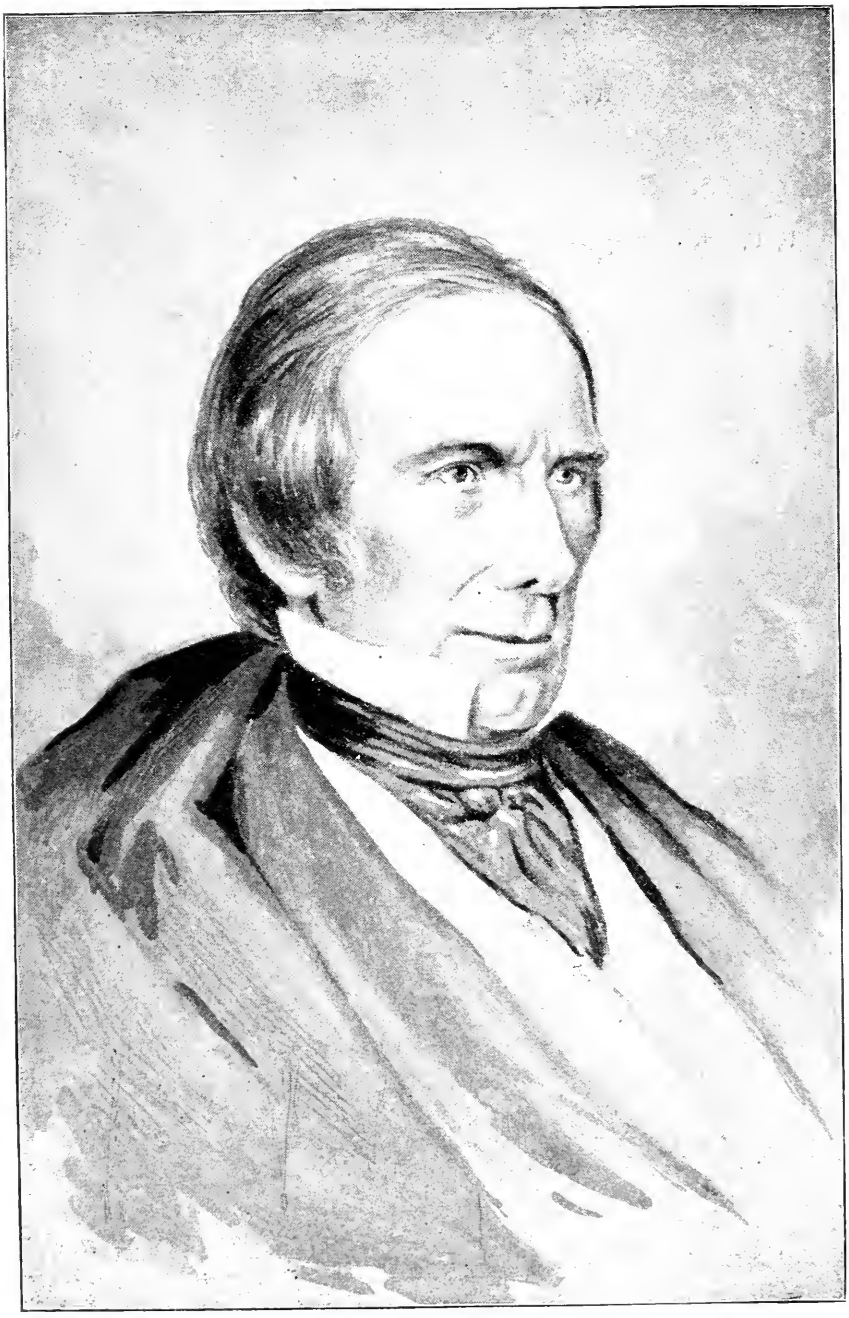
OF THE

COMMON SCHOOLS OF KENTUCKY

THIS BOOKLET

IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHORS.



HENRY CLAY.

# THE STORY OF HENRY CLAY.

## I.

When I was a little girl my grandfather told me stories.

One evening he told me about Henry Clay.

He and Henry Clay were born near each other in Virginia.

They both moved to Kentucky when they were boys.

My grandfather was always fond of his neighbor.

He loved to talk of Henry Clay, and to tell that he voted for him every time that he ran for office.

One day my teacher asked me to write a little composition about Clay. I went home, and asked grandfather to tell me all he knew about him.

This is what my grandfather told me.

Henry Clay was born in Hanover County, Virginia.

He was very poor.

His father died when he was five years old.

This was during the Revolutionary War.

His mother was left with very little money.

She had seven children to bring up.

The day her husband died some English soldiers came to her house.

They brought money to pay her for some of her husband's property, which they had destroyed.

She was very angry. They insulted her by coming on this sad day.

Besides, she did not want any British gold.

So she threw it into the fire.

She was a brave woman, and very loyal to America.

She was intelligent; she had a strong, practical mind.

She was anxious that her boys should be good and brave men.

She cared very tenderly for them.

Henry Clay used to say: "To have had such

a strong, sensible mother was a rich birthright."

He always spoke fondly and tenderly of her.

She was anxious to send her boys to school, but there were times when she could not do so.

Henry used to rise early in the morning, and drive up the cows from the pasture.

Then he helped to chop the wood and take it into the house.

After this he ate his breakfast. Then he went to school, unless he had to work on the farm.

The school-house had only one room.

It was built of rough logs. There was no floor except the hard earth.

The children sat on high benches, which did not have any backs.

This school-house was near a mill, called the Mill of the Slashes.

It was also near a church, called the Slash Church.

In this school Henry Clay learned to read, write, and count.

In the spring, Henry often stayed at home to

work on the farm. He helped to plow, or hoe the long rows of corn.

He did not like to miss school, but he was happy at his work.

He, like another famous "barefoot boy," whistled while he plowed.

He had a very generous heart.

He was glad he could work and help his mother earn a living.

On Saturday he used to go to mill.

He had no bridle except one he made of rope.

His saddle was a bag of corn or wheat.

His bare feet needed no stirrups.

In those days it took a long time to make meal or flour.

The millers made a rule that whoever got to the mill first in the morning could get his grist first.

So the boys used to get up very early in the morning, before daylight.

The whole family had shelled the corn the night before.

It took a stout heart for a little boy to get up at half past three o'clock in the morning.

But it took a still stouter heart to ride through the dense woods alone before daylight.

This, Henry Clay often did.

He sometimes felt very lonely, but he kept up a brave heart.

He knew that he did not have half so much to fear as the first boys who lived in Virginia had.

They had Indians, and also wild animals, to make them afraid.

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## II.

When Henry Clay was about fourteen years old, his mother married Captain Henry Watkins.

She and her family went to live in Richmond.

Richmond, you know, is the capital of Virginia.

Before I tell you about Henry's new home, I will tell you just how the house looked where he was born.

It was a one-story frame house, with a very large chimney at each end.

There was a shed room against each chimney.

It was in one of these shed rooms that Henry used to sleep.

He loved this old house, and disliked to leave it, although he was glad to go to Richmond.

Captain Watkins, his step-father, was a very nice man, and was glad to help his wife's children.

He had a friend who took Henry into his store to serve as clerk.

Henry used to weigh the butter and count the eggs the country women brought to exchange for sugar or coffee.

He was a very honest and polite boy. He made a good clerk.

At night he read all the books he could get.

Captain Watkins saw what a bright, faithful boy his step-son was. He thought he would try to get him a better position.

He had a friend named Colonel Tinsley in the House of Burgesses.

At that time the House of Burgesses was the law-making body of Virginia.

He asked Colonel Tinsley to get Henry a place in the Clerk's office.

Such places were hard to get, but Henry Clay was appointed.

The day Henry first went to his new work all the men in the office looked at him.

He was not a handsome boy. He was tall, raw-boned, and awkward.

He had a very pleasant face, however, and the men were interested in his looks.

He wore a gray suit of homespun clothes.

They did not fit as well as boys' clothes do now-a-days.

He had on a white linen shirt, which his mother had starched very stiff.

The collar made him feel uncomfortable.

Some of his companions saw how awkward he felt.

They laughed at him, and he blushed.

He must have felt very bad, for he knew he was not dressed as well as they.

He also knew he did not have such elegant manners.

But he felt sure he had been taught better than to laugh at a strange little country boy.

Henry Clay made up his mind then that he would show these clerks what a boy could do.

He went steadily to work. When he was not too busy, he listened silently to the conversation of the older men.

After the office hours were over, he read books, while the other boys played.

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## III.

One day the Chancellor of the High Court came into the office.

He saw Henry Clay. He knew he had not seen him there before.

He talked to him. Henry was a good talker. He knew just what to say, and he had a pleasant voice.

He spoke out clearly in answer to the questions the Chancellor asked him.

The Chancellor was pleased with his frankness, his manliness.

After talking to him a while, he said: "Henry, how would you like to do all my writing?"

Of course Henry Clay was delighted to have such employment offered him.

He began the work the very next day. All the writing was about law and the courts.

At first the writing seemed dull, but Henry soon began to study what he wrote.

One day he asked the Chancellor to explain something to him.

"Why," said the Chancellor, "what do you know about it?"

He was delighted, however, to find that his young friend had been interested.

He answered the questions for him, and asked him others. He was so pleased with Clay's answers that he brought him several books to read.

Afterward he took a short time every day to talk with the young man.

He directed his reading, and talked to him about choosing his life work.

He said to him: "Be honest and persevering, and you will succeed."

Henry Clay could not have had a wiser and better friend.

The name of the Chancellor was George Wythe. He was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Henry Clay was not the only boy he helped, who afterward became famous.

Thomas Jefferson and John Marshall were once his pupils.

Thomas Jefferson, you know, was our third President.

John Marshall was a great lawyer.

Henry Clay wrote for the Chancellor for four years.

He then made up his mind to be a lawyer.

He studied for one year. At the end of this time he got his license to begin practice.

He did not now look like the mill boy of the Slashes, who had walked into the Clerk's office five years before.

He was known to be extremely bright, and to have a fine character.

Chancellor Wythe invited him to his own home. Then many other of the best families asked him to visit them.

Henry Clay soon became very popular.

He and several other young men formed a debating club.

He soon became the leader.

He was not only very bright, but he had not a single bad habit.

The mothers in Richmond were very glad to have him as a companion for their sons.

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## IV.

Henry Clay had but little money.

He believed he could not earn much in Richmond for many years.

There were so many older lawyers, who were very great men.

He decided to go to Lexington, Kentucky.

Kentucky was then just beginning to be a state.

There was one college and a school in Lexington.

They had one newspaper, also a library. George Washington had given them some of the

money to buy books. These same books are in the library to-day.

Mr. Clay often saw men come into Lexington wearing their fringed buckskin suits, and each carrying a rifle and powder horn.

But there were also many educated people in the town.

Mr. Clay was just about twenty-one years old at that time.

He was of a sunny nature and very sociable, besides being a brilliant talker.

He soon became a great favorite with the people.

He organized another debating club.

One night he was asked to speak.

This was his first speech in his new home.

He was young. He was a stranger. He was frightened. He knew his future success depended on this speech.

He arose and said: "Gentlemen of the Jury."

He was so frightened, he forgot that he was not in court.

He saw his mistake. He said to himself: "I

must make these people see that I can do better, just as I once did the boys in the Clerk's office in Richmond.

He kept on talking. The people soon began to listen. They wanted to hear every word. They had never heard a finer voice, or a grander speech.

When he sat down, the people applauded with all their might.

After that speech Henry Clay was always called on to speak at every public meeting.

He soon began to practice law. He was very successful.

Whenever anybody was too poor to hire a lawyer, Clay would plead his case for nothing. He was very tender hearted. He would not allow people to suffer if he could help them.

One time two poor Germans were being tried for their lives.

Clay was their lawyer.

Everybody thought they would be hanged.

Clay made a grand speech in their favor, and saved their lives.

The mother of these two Germans was so

HOME OF HENRY CLAY, ASHLAND, KY.

thankful that she put her arms round Mr. Clay's neck, and kissed him time and again.

When Clay had been in Lexington a year and a half, he married Miss Lucretia Hart.

They soon after went to live at Ashland, the beautiful farm of six hundred acres just outside the city limits of Lexington, Kentucky.

He never had any other home after that. Ashland is still one of the most beautiful homes in the Blue Grass region of Kentucky.

Under its generous roof have been entertained all the famous visitors to the Blue Grass.

Mr. Clay and his wife began the hospitality for which the place has ever since been noted.

The house was richly furnished in old colonial style. In one of the parlors was a handsome painting of the Washington family.

Ashland is now owned by Maj. Henry McDowell, whose wife is Mr. Clay's grand-daughter.

Miss Madge McDowell, the youngest daughter of the house, has written some articles for the *Century Magazine*.

Near Ashland is Woodland Park, which was once a part of the Clay farm.

In Woodland, year after year, is held the Kentucky Chatauqua.

Every season great speakers from all over the world go to Woodland, to visit the home of the greatest American orator.

Under the lofty trees they rest, and think of the great man who often retired to the peace and quiet of Ashland, after some political struggle or disappointment.

---

## V.

Not long after Mr. Clay's marriage he made his first speech on slavery.

He said the slaves ought to be free.

He did not want them to be taken from their masters all at once, but he thought they ought to be gradually given their liberty.

He made a very great speech in favor of freeing the poor slaves.

The people did not like this speech.

Clay was always glad that he made it, because it was right, even if it was not popular.

One day there was a great political gathering in Lexington.

Farmers from miles around had gathered in a big field to listen to some great speakers.

There was talk of a law being made in Congress which the people did not want. They wished to hear what their great speakers thought of it.

Mr. George Nicholas spoke first. It was thought that he was the greatest speaker in the city.

Henry Clay spoke next. The people were so pleased that they would listen to no one else.

The men carried Mr. Clay and Mr. Nicholas on their backs to a carriage and then pulled them through all the streets of Lexington.

They shouted: "Hurrah for Henry Clay!"

"Hurrah for George Nicholas!"

"Hurrah for the Red, White, and Blue!"

Clay was soon after elected to represent his county in the Legislature.

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Clay was soon after elected to represent his county in the Legislature.

He lacked three days of being old enough to serve, but he was permitted to stay.

After this he was sent to the United States Senate.

He made a speech four days after entering the Senate. It was about building a bridge across the Potomac River.

He carried his point. The bridge was built.

Mr. Clay believed that the United States ought to protect and encourage home industries.

He wanted the people to raise their own cotton, sugar, corn, wheat, and all vegetables and fruits that would grow in this country.

He wanted them also to make the things they raised into useful articles that would sell.

Up to that time the people of the United States had bought nearly all their cloth from England.

Mr. Clay wanted the people to make their own goods.

He wanted them to have their own colleges, their own books, and all the articles they needed in their houses.

He made a great many speeches in favor of the Home System, before the members of Congress.

These speeches made the people like Mr. Clay.

Henry Clay became so well known that his friends in Kentucky were very proud of him.

They elected him to one office after another as fast as he served each term.

Sometimes he was in the State Senate at Frankfort, but most of the time in the United States Senate at Washington.

He was speaker of the House of Representatives for a great many years.

The men thought him so great that they obeyed the motion of his hand.

One day, a short while after Mr. Clay went to Congress, he was walking down a street near the capitol.

He saw several boys teasing a goat. This goat was known by almost everybody in Washington.

Clay was fond of animals. He did not like to see the boys treat the goat so cruelly.

He talked to them about it. They liked Mr. Clay's friendly ways so much that they stopped.

But the Billy-goat did not understand that Mr. Clay was his friend.

Before Mr. Clay had time to get out of the way, the goat was butting at him.

He caught Billy by the horns.

The boys thought it was funny to see a grown man wrestling with a goat.

But they thought Billy very ungrateful for Mr. Clay's friendship.

So they said to Mr. Clay: "Let loose his horns and run, and we will run with you."

This he did, and all ran off together.

The boys liked Mr. Clay because he showed so much kindness.

They knew the goat did not know any better. They were sorry they had teased him, for this had made him think every human being was his enemy.

So they told Mr. Clay they would not tease the old Billy-goat any more.

## VI.

There were a great many troublesome questions in Congress when Mr. Clay was a member.

He was a powerful leader, and there were always men who were proud to follow him.

He was nearly always on the side of right. He rarely failed to win.

One question came up when Mr. Monroe was President.

It was about the liberty of some of the countries in South America.

Mr. Clay was sorry for any people who wanted liberty.

He pleaded for their rights. He wanted to help them win their cause.

Many people in the South American colonies sent him letters of thanks.

He also helped the people of Greece when they fought for their liberty.

He was never tired of pleading for the liberty of any people.

That was why he often made speeches like the first one he made, to free the colored slaves.

He did not want a war between the North and the South.

He pleaded again and again for peace.

One time when the United States was in trouble with another country, he went with some other men to Ghent, Holland. There they made peace between the two countries.

People all over the United States loved him.

The people in Virginia and Kentucky loved him best of all.

One time he and Mrs. Clay made a trip to New England.

At all the towns people came out to meet him.

At some places the line of people was a mile long.

Nearly everywhere he was given some present for the services he had done the country.

At Boston he was invited to a banquet to be given in his honor at Faneuil Hall.

This Hall is called the Cradle of Liberty.

Washington had made speeches there.

Webster had made a great speech there.

Many of the greatest people of America and of other countries had been invited there.

Mr. and Mrs. Clay could not go to the banquet.

But not long afterwards Mr. Clay went to visit the Hall.

In this Hall are many relics of the Revolutionary War.

Before he had been there long a crowd began to gather.

He was asked for a speech.

He made a splendid one.

The people shouted till they were hoarse.

He then shook hands with five thousand people.

The next day the young men of Boston gave him two elegant silver pitchers.

A gentleman named Mr. Lynde sent Mrs. Clay a bonnet.

With the bonnet he sent a note to Mr. Clay.

In the note he said: "I believe that Mrs. Clay will like to wear it, because the straw was grown and woven in America."

The silk in which it was trimmed was also made in America.

He added: "I am about to set up one hundred looms for weaving goods. I expect to have a large trade. I could not have done this except for the good laws you made."

He also stated that the name of the young lady who made the bonnet was Miss Brigham.

Mr. Clay wrote a nice letter of thanks to Miss Brigham and Mr. Lynde.

At Mt. Auburn, Clay was greeted by three old soldiers who had fought many years before at Concord.

Concord is in Massachusetts. It was there that one of the first battles in the war for freedom was fought.

When he went to the theatre the people rose and the band played Yankee Doodle.

He and Mrs. Clay were given a reception by the President of Harvard College.

Everywhere he went he was honored.

This would not have been true if he had not been unselfish and brave.

## VII.

But not all of Mr. Clay's life was pleasant.

He had a great deal of sorrow.

His enemies made many bitter remarks about him. He sometimes lost his temper and said unpleasant things. This lost him many friends.

He had six daughters and five sons.

All of his daughters died young.

One of them died in Ohio on her way to Washington with her father.

Henry Clay, his favorite son, was killed at the battle of Buena Vista, during the Mexican War.

Mr. Clay was very sad over the death of his children. He was devoted to them. It was a great sorrow for so many of them to die.

He had many other disappointments.

His friends wanted him to be President.

He ran for the office twice, but was defeated.

When he was defeated, his friends in Kentucky loved him all the more.

When he came home to live at Ashland, they gave him a dinner at Fowler's Garden.

They asked him to speak. There never was another such speech made. He thanked his friends for all they had done for him.

The people cried when he spoke of the way they had helped him bear his burdens and his wrongs.

Then he told them what they ought to do to make a great State and a great Union.

## VIII.

Henry Clay had very many honors shown him.

He filled many prominent places in the Nation.

One time the young men of New York gave him a gold medal.

On the medal were mentioned some of the great things which Henry Clay had done for the people; also some of the offices he had held.

Senate, 1806.
Speaker, 1811.
War of 1812 with Great Britain.
Ghent, 1814.
Spanish America, 1822.

Missouri Compromise, 1821.
American System, 1824.
Greece, 1824.
Secretary of State, 1825.
Panama Instructions, 1826.
Tariff Compromise, 1833.
Public Dominion, 1833–1841.
Peace with France Preserved, 1835.
Compromise, 1850.

These points you cannot understand now, but you will when you are older. These were not all the ways in which he helped his country.

He made many speeches in favor of good roads and canals.

On a road called the Cumberland a statue was raised. This statue was called the Genius of Liberty. Henry Clay's name was carved on the base.

Mr. Clay had two friends in Kentucky who also became famous. One was a painter whose name was Jouett, the other a sculptor whose name was Hart.

Jouett was the most famous portrait painter in America at that time. It gave him great pleasure to paint Henry Clay's picture. It is now one of the sacred treasures of Kentucky.

Joel T. Hart was said by his critics to be the greatest sculptor of his time. The women of Virginia asked him to make a statue of Henry Clay. He went to Florence, Italy, to put his model into marble.

This statue now stands in the rotunda of the capitol at Richmond, Virginia.

When the lawmakers of Mr. Clay's native State pass by this splendid statue, they are perhaps reminded of the great man who spent his life for his country.

In New Orleans there is a bronze statue of the "Great Pacificator," as Clay was often called, made by Hart.

The most successful statue Hart ever made is the one of Mr. Clay which now stands in the court house of Louisville, Kentucky.

It is a grand statue of a powerful orator.

Joel T. Hart loved and appreciated Mr. Clay and Clay honored the genius of the sculptor.

We are glad that the names of two of Kentucky's greatest men will, through these statues, ever be associated in the memories of her people.

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